

# News Release

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## **BLM issues innovative Roan Plateau plan**

GLENWOOD SPRINGS – The proposed management plan for the 73,602-acre Roan Plateau Planning Area released today outlines an innovative approach to oil and gas development. It provides significant protection for fish and wildlife habitat, remote areas and scenic views through strict development requirements, including use of the latest directional drilling techniques.

The Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment guides the management of all resources and activities on Bureau of Land Management lands within the planning area, which is northwest of Rifle, Colo.

“We developed this plan with significant help and time from our cooperating agencies, which include the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Garfield and Rio Blanco counties, the town of Parachute, and the cities of Glenwood Springs and Rifle,” said Glenwood Springs BLM Field Manager Jamie Connell.

More than 50 percent of the area on top and below the Plateau would be stipulated “no surface occupancy” to create wildlife seclusion areas, protect Colorado River cutthroat trout and water resources, and protect views from Interstate 70, State Highway 13 and local communities. This approach, originally submitted by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and refined through cooperating agency meetings, would also allow more than 90 percent of the federal natural gas in the planning area to be recovered.

“The level of collaboration among local, state and federal agencies on this plan is something we should strive for in all our interactions,” said Russ George, executive director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. “The specific details found in the plan provide an excellent model for oil and gas development in ecologically sensitive areas.”

Habitat fragmentation and surface disturbance would further be minimized on top of the Plateau through a federal unit agreement in which one operator would conduct all development activities on behalf of all lease holders. This allows BLM to tightly control the timing and location of development and eliminates the need for duplicative facilities.

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Development would be limited to the higher ridges away from the ecologically sensitive canyons and streams. It would be staged so that no more than one percent of the 34,758 acres on top of the Plateau would be disturbed at any one time. Wells would be clustered on multi-well pads not closer than one-half mile apart, with a maximum surface density of one pad per 160 acres.

The 73,602-acre Roan Plateau Planning Area includes the 56,238 acres of Naval Oil Shale Reserves 1 and 3. The reserves were originally set aside as mineral reserves and transferred to BLM from the Department of Energy by Congress in 1997. The legislation instructed BLM to develop a multiple-use resource management plan for the area and enter into leases for the exploration, development and production of petroleum “as soon as practicable.” The resulting proposed management plan includes prescriptions for oil and gas leasing, road and route management, grazing, and visual resource management, and other activities.

Copies of the plan and additional information can be found at <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/roanplateau> or the Glenwood Springs Field Office, 50629 Hwy 6 & 24, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602.

A 30-day public protest period will officially begin when the Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register, which is anticipated to occur Sept. 15. Colorado Gov. Bill Owens also has 60 days to review the Proposed Plan for consistency with state law.

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